

# TIMBER TALK

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## TWO WOODEN PORTRAIT MODELS FOR RENAISSANCE MEDALS

by Stanley Clute

Albrecht Durer (1472 to 1528) was foremost among the German painters of the Renaissance. He was born in Nuremburg, a city famed among numismatists for its later thriving manufacture of jetons.

A journey to Italy gave Durer a firsthand knowledge of early Renaissance art. He also undertook a trip to the Netherlands. Durer found the means to clarify his mind and vision through the New Learning of the humanists and mathematicians of the Renaissance. He was a very religious man who attempted to understand

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and show in his works what God had in mind when He created the world and when he sent Jesus Christ as its redeemer.

It has been said that Durer was essentially not a painter but a draughtsman. Through him the media of woodcut and engraving gained a new important role, woodcut prints ultimately replacing the painted illustrations in books. Durer designed woodcut cycles of the Life of the Virgin, the Passion, and the Apocalypse. Shown on page one is his "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" which was executed about 1497-98.

In a book, "Unknown Renaissance Portraits" published by the Phaidon Press, there appear photos of two carved wooden models for the obverses of medals depicting Albrecht Durer. The first medal is attributed to Matthes Gebel in 1527. The wooden portrait model, however, is now generally attributed to Martin Schaffner, a painter, woodcarver and medallist who worked at Ulm from 1499 to 1547. This wooden model is shown above.

Some experts believe, however, that this wooden model is only a copy after a finer style stone model which is also known to exist (shown on next page) and is definitely attributed to Gebel. It is also known that a stone model for the medal's reverse was produced after Durer's death. It is noted that both the wood and stone models are of a higher quality than the cast medal





itself.

The second model in wood is credited to Hans Schwarz, who has been called "the only German medallist who succeeds in attaining powerful expression." It has been claimed that Durer's Hungarian ancestry shows clearly in the "striking portrait".

The medal was produced by Schwarz early in 1520, while he was in Nuremburg and saw Durer frequently. It has been noted that the wooden portrait model has greater character than the bronze medal cast from it. This wooden model is shown on page 4.

The first wooden model shown here has been enlarged about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times, while the stone model and the second wood model have been enlarged about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times

REFERENCES: Phaidon Press, Unknown Renaissance Portraits, London, 1952  
 Brieger, Peter H., G. Stephen Vickers & Frederick E. Winter,  
Art And Man, Book Two, Toronto, 1964.





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CHRISTMAS IS COMING...

Now is the time to think about ordering your Christmas woods. Rounds are available from Gelvin Leeper, 1350 North Hancock St., Fremont, Nebraska 68205, U. S. A. Wooden flats may be obtained from Frank DeGilio, 32 Oakwood Blvd., Poughkeepsie, New York 12603, U. S. A. Examples of Christmas flats and rounds are shown below.

